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ADDRESS

OF

M. W. WILLIAM SEWALL GARDNER,

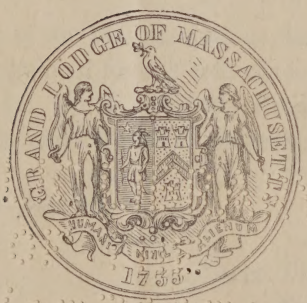
GRAND MASTER,

BEFORE THE

7568.117

Grand Lodge of Massachusetts,

MARCH 10, 1869.



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GRAND LODGE OF MASSACHUSETTS,

GRAND SECRETARY'S OFFICE, BOSTON, April 2, 1869.

At the QUARTERLY COMMUNICATION of the M.W. GRAND LODGE OF MASSACHUSETTS, held at the Masonic Temple, Boston, March 10, 1869, the following resolutions were adopted unanimously :—

IN GRAND LODGE OF MASSACHUSETTS, March 10, 1869.

Resolved, That the address of the M.W. Grand Master be referred to a committee of five for examination, and that they also nominate persons to compose the committees therein recommended.

Resolved, That the address be at once printed, and copies sent to each Lodge in the jurisdiction for the information of the Fraternity.

Resolved, That the action of the Board of Directors, fixing eight dollars ($8.00) as the Commutation-Fee for the Grand-Lodge Capitation Tax, be approved and confirmed.

In conformity to the first resolution, the Most Worshipful Grand Master appointed for the committee, R.W. Br. Henry Chickering, W. Br. N. T. Merritt, Franklin H. Sprague, Theodore Adams, and Charles H. Morris.

A true copy of Record.

Attest,

SOLON THORNTON,

Recording Grand Secretary

ADDRESS

OF

M.W. WILLIAM S. GARDNER, GRAND MASTER,

BEFORE THE

Grand Lodge of Massachusetts,

MARCH 10, 1869.

BRETHREN OF THE GRAND LODGE, — It is somewhat unusual for the Grand Master to make formal communications to the Grand Lodge at the Quarterly Meetings thereof; but there are some matters which I deem of so much consequence that I have considered it proper to lay them before you, and to recommend such action in relation thereto as their importance demands.

Without making any preliminary remarks, I will proceed directly to the subjects to which I desire to call your attention.

I. THE RECORDS OF THE GRAND LODGE,

Extending from 1733 to the present time, contain the History of the Establishment of Masonry upon this Continent, and are of inestimable value. Of late years, it has been customary to publish an "Abstract" of the Annual Proceedings, but these printed volumes omit many things contained in the Records, especially every thing relating to Finances. The Constitutions require the Recording Grand Secretary to "make a transcript of the Records annually, immediately after the September Communication of the Grand Lodge." The object of this provision was, undoubtedly, that the Grand Lodge, at the Annual Meeting in Decem-

ber following, might know by inspection that this work had been properly and carefully done. This transcript is required to guard against the destruction of the original Reccord. It was intended that two copies of the Record should be pre-preserved in different places, so that the Grand Lodge might receive no detriment should one copy be consumed.

Until within the past ten years, it has been customary to have an annual examination of these Records, and a report thereof made to the Grand Lodge at the Annual Meeting. This duty devolved upon the Finance Committee, which, until the year 1818, was appointed by the Grand Master. In the year 1817, a Charter was received from the Legislature of Massachusetts, and, soon after, this Committee of Finance was recognized by the Constitutions, and made elective. In the Constitutions of 1820, its duties are defined, and among them is the following: "to examine the records of the Grand Secretaries, and have them transcribed into the transcript books."

From that year until 1859, when the present Charter was obtained, this Committee reported annually to the Grand Lodge the state and condition of these Records, and usually in this language, "that they have examined the Records of the Recording Grand Secretary for the past year, and find them correctly kept and accurately transcribed."

In 1860, the Constitutions were again amended to meet the supposed requirements of the new corporation, and the Auditing Committee was provided for, and this duty of examining the Records, which had been recognized for more than a century in this Grand Lodge, was entirely obliterated. Since then, so far as I can learn, the Records have not been examined by any Committee of the Grand Lodge. For these years the Records have been confided to faithful hands, and undoubtedly they have been correctly kept. But who of the Grand Lodge can vouch for this?

In view of the great value of these Records, I would recommend that a Committee be appointed to examine them, and report, —

1. The condition in which the originals are kept;

2. The condition of the transcripts;

3. Where the originals and transcripts are kept, together with the number of volumes of each.

I would also recommend that the same Committee report an amendment to the Constitutions, requiring this duty to be annually performed.

II. The Grand Charity Fund

Is recognized as being duly established by this Grand Lodge in Part Second of the Constitutions, and is as follows : —

"Sect. 1. — The Charity Fund established by this Grand Lodge shall be styled 'the Charity Fund of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts,' and shall consist of Fifty Thousand Dollars.

"Sect. 2. — The Charity Fund shall be held in the name of the Grand Lodge, and shall be under the direction of a Board of Trustees; and said Board shall be styled 'the Trustees of the Charity Fund of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts.'

"Sect. 3. — The interest arising annually from this Fund shall be appropriated, as the Grand Lodge shall direct, for the relief of such poor and distressed brethren, their widows and orphans, as may be deemed worthy of assistance; but all interest unappropriated at the end of each year shall be paid over by the Trustees to the Treasurer of the Grand Lodge. *Provided, nevertheless*, That, if this Fund shall at any time be reduced below the sum prescribed in Sec. 1, all such unappropriated interest shall be added yearly to the principal, until it shall again amount to Fifty Thousand Dollars."

. . . . . I am unable to state in what condition this fund is, or to make you any report in relation to it. No report has been made to this Grand Lodge for many years concerning it. I cannot inform you of whom the Board of Trustees consist, if such a Board is in existence. The Article of the Constitutions is plain, explicit, and direct; and I recommend that a Committee be appointed to examine into the state and disposition of this Fund,

and of the interest accruing from it, and report thereon, with the number and names of the Trustees, and of the vacancies, if any, in the Board.

III. The Sinking Fund,

For the payment of the debt incurred in building this Temple, was established by the Grand Lodge, with the provision, that the moneys constituting this Fund shall be separately invested by the Grand Treasurer, under the direction of the Board of Directors, and pledged to the payment of the debt upon the Temple; and also, that the Grand Treasurer, at the Annual Meeting of the Grand Lodge, shall make a full and exact report of this Fund, of the amount received from each Lodge, the amount invested, and how invested, and of all matters relating thereto.

At the last Annual Meeting of this Grand Lodge no report was made by the Grand Treasurer in reference to this Fund, as is required by the vote of the Grand Lodge above referred to. The Auditing Committee, at that meeting, reported, that, during the past year, in addition to the payment of the current expenses of the Grand Lodge, all taxes, insurance, and interest on the whole debt, our liabilities have been reduced by the sum of $28,000, and in addition $23,000 of floating debt have been funded in the bonds having eight years to run. This Committee also verbally reported that the Grand Treasurer was then unable to make a proper and full report of the condition of the Sinking Fund.

Since then no report has been made, except such as I hereinafter make in behalf of the Grand Treasurer. I recommend that a Committee be appointed to examine into the condition and investment of this Fund, and report thereon to the Grand Lodge.

IV. The Masonic Temple

Has been completed and occupied for more than twenty months. The amount of its cost, in the aggregate, has been stated to you from this place; but no report has been made to the Grand Lodge by the Board of Directors of the details of this vast expendi-

ture of the money of the Masons of Massachusetts. Every affiliated Mason in this jurisdiction has been, and still is, paying money towards the extinguishment of the debt created in this erection. They have the right to an open, plain, business-like statement of all the expenditures incurred. In addition to this, a complete, detailed, financial history of this building should be put upon the Records of this Grand Lodge for the benefit of future generations. The corporation is ephemeral. Let us hope that the Grand Lodge is not so. In 1817, this Grand Lodge received from the State government a Charter similar to what it now has, but, in less than fifteen years, it was surrendered, and the corporation ceased to exist. The Grand Lodge, with its Records survives; but now where are the Records of that corporation? A new Charter was granted in 1859, and this corporation may have as short a life as the first.

More than all, the Grand Lodge should have upon its Records an inventory of all the personal property which embellish these halls.

I recommend that a Committee, composed of brethren of financial experience, be appointed to examine into, and report in detail upon, the contracts and expenses of this building; that they report an inventory of the personal property, and cost thereof, belonging to the Grand Lodge contained in the Temple; and that they have full access to all the books, papers, and documents of the Board of Directors, and of the Grand Treasurer, for the better performance of this duty.

V. Charters.

At present there exists no copies, in the archives of the Grand Lodge, of the Charters granted to subordinate Lodges.

In form, these Charters are substantially alike, and copies can now be readily obtained from those Lodges in existence.

I recommend that some means be devised to procure and preserve in the Grand Secretary's office a copy of every Charter granted by the Grand Lodge to its subordinates, and that here-

after copies be retained of all Charters granted. I refer the matter to your consideration.

VI. The Board of Directors,

Immediately after the organization of the Grand Lodge in December last, met, and, at a meeting held on the 4th of January, 1869, passed the following vote: "That the sum of eight dollars be accepted, until otherwise ordered, for the Commutation Fee of the Grand Lodge." The pressing necessities of the Finance Committee of the Board demanded the passage of this vote, and it is now reported to you, and its confirmation by the Grand Lodge requested.

The floating debt amounts now to $60,000, and was materially reduced the last year. The whole amount of money received from the brethren for the Sinking Fund amounts to $60,278.25, and is apportioned among the several Districts as follows: —

	No. of Lodges.	Am't paid in 1868.	No. of Members.
District No. 1, Boston	15	$1,781.00	2,446
„ 2, Charlestown	10	1,273.00	1,407
„ 3, Roxbury	11	1,797.00	1,276
„ 4, Cambridge	10	1,051.00	1,111
„ 5, Salem	10	1,167.00	1,133
„ 6, Newburyport	10	1,378.75	1,264
„ 7, Lowell	10	1,680.75	961
„ 8, Greenfield	9	816.75	747
„ 9, Pittsfield	8	617.25	707
„ 10, Springfield	10	1,151.25	1,191
„ 11, Worcester	10	1,498.50	1,176
„ 12, Milford	11	835.25	904
„ 13, Taunton	11	1,194.00	921
„ 14, New Bedford	10	1,152.00	1,151
„ 15, Barnstable	9	818.00	951
„ 16, Plymouth	10	1,959.25	1,018
	164	$20,170.50	18,364
Collected by Grand Treasurer in small sums		15,098.75	
Total amount collected in 1868		$35,269.25	
Add amount collected in 1867		25,009.00	
Total amount received to January 1, 1869		$60,278.25	

If this Commutation Tax of Eight Dollars is adopted by the Grand Lodge, it is to be hoped that strenuous exertions will be made by all the brethren to pay up this amount, and thus relieve the embarrassments of the Board of Directors. The District Deputy Grand Masters are especially urged to present this matter to the Lodges of their respective Districts, and urge upon them renewed endeavors to pay the tax in the manner proposed. The Board of Directors have appointed Brothers Sereno D. Nickerson, Percival L. Everett, and Warren Fisher, Jr., a Committee on Finance, and to these brethren, as well as to one other whose name needs not to be mentioned in Sutton Hall, the Grand Lodge is indebted this day for the preservation of its credit. These brethren have labored in season and out of season, with their private funds as frequently as with those of the Grand Lodge, to meet the oft accruing liabilities. To aid them in this labor of love they ask the co-operation of the brethren in the payment of the tax.

It will be seen that about one-third of this tax has been paid by the brethren. If the remaining two-thirds could be collected this year, it would place the Grand Lodge in a condition of comparative ease.

Will the brethren, now that they are acquainted with all the pressing necessities of the Board of Directors, join heart and hand in supporting those whom they have chosen to act for them, and help sustain the burden?

On the 14th of December, 1859, the Committee of Finance of the Grand Lodge made the following report, which I desire to read to you *in extenso*: —

"The Committee have attended to the duty of examining the books of the Recording Grand Secretary, and find the Records have been correctly kept and faithfully transcribed.

"The Committee have also examined the accounts of the Grand Treasurer for the past year; and, as to all items thereof, except those relative to the Winthrop House estate, he has exhibited

the proper vouchers ; — as to those excepted items, your Committee must refer to the Board of Directors of this Grand Lodge, under whose authority these items have been received and paid ; all the accounts are correctly cast, and the balance on hand December, 10, 1859, the date of the examination, was, in cash, $2,048.15. Annexed is a statement of the Grand Treasurer's account to date. The accounts of the Treasurer have heretofore only shown the amount of cash received and paid by him during the year.

"Your Committee think, that, considering the large amount and great variety of the estate and property of the Grand Lodge, a more complete system of book-keeping ought to be adopted,— one that would of itself show a full statement of the condition of the property of the Grand Lodge,— and for that purpose would recommend that an inventory and valuation of all the property of the Grand Lodge be made by a Committee to be appointed, and that the Grand Treasurer be directed to enter the same in his books, and after classifying the same in some suitable manner, to open and keep impersonal accounts as to each class in such manner as to show the state and condition in full of each class, with the cost thereof ; and that expenses be classified in like manner in his accounts.

Signed,

S. P. Oliver.
W. H. L. Smith.
Solon Thornton."

The carrying out of these recommendations was referred to the same Committee. The next year (1860), the Committee on Finance made its last Report, but no allusion is made to the subject matter of the above Report, which was referred to them.

An Auditing Committee, such as now exists, took the place of the Committee on Finance.

Each of the above named brethren subsequently became members of the Board of Directors ; but I find no movement made by

them, either in the Board, or in the Grand Lodge, to carry out the wise suggestions of that Report.

Since then (1859), no inventory of the property of the Grand Lodge has been taken, so far as I can ascertain; and to-day no such inventory exists. Since the organization of the present Board of Directors, a Committee has been appointed to make an inventory and valuation of the property of the Grand Lodge. When completed, if satisfactory to you, it will be entered upon the Records.

From the date of that Report to the present time, no system of book-keeping has been adopted save that mentioned by the Committee.

The Grand Treasurer's books show simply the amount of money received, and from whom; and the amount of money paid, and to whom. It hardly seems credible that half a million of dollars could be expended, and the accounts kept in that manner, with any proper knowledge of the transactions.

For the purpose of establishing some system of book-keeping, the Board of Directors, on the second of February last, passed the following vote: —

"That the various items of expenditure of the Grand Lodge be charged to the following accounts: —

"Grand Master's account,
"Grand Secretary's account,
"Grand Treasurer's account,
"District Deputy Grand Master's account,
"Interest,
"Temple expense,
"Charity,
"Incidental expenses."

It should, in justice to the Grand Treasurer, be stated, that he is in no wise responsible for the manner in which the accounts and books have been kept. He is not a member of the Board of Directors, and knows nothing of its doings, except as he is

informed. He cannot charge his payments to any appropriation or impersonal account, without special directions; nor can he credit his receipts to such accounts without instruction from the Board.

Whether the system which has just been inaugurated is a wise one, time only can determine. Whether it meets with your approbation, is for you to decide.

While alluding to the Board of Directors, I desire to call your attention to what may justly be considered a growing evil, viz., the concentration of the powers of the Grand Lodge in the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors dedicated this Temple. In March, 1867, the M.W. Grand Master announced from this station, "that the dedication of the New Masonic Temple would take place on the 24th of June next." The Grand Lodge passed no vote in relation to it; raised no Committee; took no action whatever. This was all done by the Board of Directors. They voted when the Temple should be dedicated,— who should be invited to witness it,— what should be done,— and who should do it. All this was within the peculiar province of the Grand Lodge. Whether the Grand Lodge would have been as successful as the Board of Directors were, need not be even asked. This is referred to as an instance of the evil to which I call your attention.

So, in the erection of this building, the Board of Directors have kept the Grand Lodge entirely in the dark in relation to the details. A Committee of this Grand Lodge, in March, 1867, reported that the expense of this Temple and its furniture, when completed, and it was then within three months of completion, would be $300,000; and the Committee thought that they were making liberal estimates of the expenses; and yet in the same copy of the Proceedings of this Grand Lodge in which that Report is published, the Grand Master, in his address, makes the costs $453,532.03; more that $150,000 above what your Committee were permitted to know at the time they made their report. The Grand Lodge should have no close corporation

within it. If it has been necessary, under the peculiar circumstances in which the financial affairs of the Grand Lodge have been permitted to exist, to keep all knowledge of those affairs carefully preserved in the breasts of a few; it is believed that the necessity does not now exist, and that it is better for all, that our true condition should be known, at least, to all the members of the Grand Lodge.

I am touching upon delicate ground, because it may be said that I am complaining of previous administrations. It is not my intention so to do. I *am* complaining of a system which is growing up here, of ignoring this Grand Lodge, composed of the Representatives of the great Body of Masonry in Massachusetts.

Soon after the first Charter was granted, in 1817, to the Grand Lodge, a great jealousy sprung up among the brethren against the corporation. Much ill-feeling existed, and strong language was made use of. To such an extent did this grow, that a Committee of inquiry was raised to examine into and report upon the disaffection. The report of this Committee is spread upon the Records; and it appears that the brethren complained of claimed that the language used was made in the exercise of rights and duties of members of the Grand Lodge.

Although this strong feeling existed at that time against the Act of Incorporation, an examination of the By-Laws, as they were then called, instead of Constitutions, will show how much more power was reserved to the Grand Lodge itself — to the corporation — than has been under our present system. They made the Grand Master, Deputy Grand Master, Grand Wardens, and Recording Grand Secretary, a Board of Trustees of the real and personal estate of the Grand Lodge, the tenure of which was in the name, and for the behoof of "the Master, Wardens, and Members of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts;" and a majority of them had the power to use the seal for the purpose of carrying into effect all the contracts and resolutions adopted by the Grand Lodge. The said Trustees, or a majority of them, had power to do and transact all things relative to the real and

personal property of the Grand Lodge, in the name and in the behalf of the corporation, which were not in the By-Laws otherwise provided for.

The Grand Lodge could then hold real estate to the amount of $20,000 only, and personal estate to the amount of $60,000. An examination of the Records show, that the vote of the Grand Lodge was required for the Treasurer to sell a $100 United-States Bond. The brethren voted upon nearly every matter connected with the finances. The By-Laws or Constitutions also required that a financial statement of the affairs of the Grand Lodge should be annually communicated to the several Lodges.

It would have been almost impossible, at least very inconvenient, to carry on the great work which has been done here by the Grand Lodge, as a voluntary association. The machinery of a corporation was necessary, and no one at this day can regret that resource was had to it.

With such power as legitimately belongs to the Board of Directors its influence is great and extensive enough, without absorbing those rights and prerogatives which appertain exclusively to this Grand Body. They have labor sufficient in taking care of the Finances, and should not be burdened with other cares.

Thus, brethren, I have given you my views, very briefly, in relation to matters which I consider of great moment in the administration of the affairs of the Grand Lodge, at the first opportunity which has presented itself.

I was unwilling to go on as your Grand Master without coming to a fair understanding, and giving you as true a statement as I could of the condition of the Grand Lodge. It is for you now to say whether it shall continue as it has, or whether you will take immediate steps to remedy the defects which have been pointed out. At any rate, brethren, I have done my duty to you in this particular.

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